

## **APPENDIX 8**

### **Project STAR**

In recent years an increasing number of Montanans have chosen to live in rural areas where their homes and property are at increased risk from wildfires. In the summer of 2007 the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association working with the Department of Natural Resources & Conservation identified the need for a better means to coordinate and execute the evacuation of citizens threatened by an advancing wildfire. The MSPOA and DNRC developed a program called Project STAR which integrates sheriffs' deputies and peace officers into the incident command structure of a major wildfire. The intent is to provide improved communication and coordination between firefighters and law enforcement when evacuations are taking place and fire conditions are changing rapidly.

A similar evacuation situation can be foreseen with respect to other emergency incidents and natural disasters. A STAR team may be mobilized in support of one of these non-wildfire emergencies in a manner similar to a mobilization in response to a wildfire. Even if the DNRC is not involved directly in the management of the incident the STAR team may be mobilized through the DNRC & interagency dispatch system.

A STAR Team may be mobilized for any incident directly within the Law Enforcement community under the sponsorship of the MSPOA. When mobilized in this manner the Montana DNRC will have no direct involvement unless the team was ordered in support of a wildfire under DNRC fire protection responsibility.

A STAR Team may be mobilized through the interagency wildfire dispatch system in support of a wildfire emergency. Orders for STAR teams in a wildfire are initiated by the Incident Management Team responsible for managing the incident or from the responsible agency line officer or designated representative.

Orders for a STAR Team in a non-wildfire emergency must originate from the responsible agency and be placed to the Department of Military Affairs Disaster & Emergency Services. The DES subsequently places a resource order for this service to the Northern Rockies Coordination Center. The order is then forwarded to an interagency zone dispatch center to dispatch the resource.

For more information on Project Star, contact Kathy McGowan with the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association at (406) 443-5669, or Doug Williams with the Montana DNRC at (406) 622-5455 or (406) 788-7718.